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ABSTRACT

This document contains four symposium papers on work force issues facing human resource development (HRD). "Contributing Factors to the Success of Women and People of Color in Leadership Roles: A Message to HRD Professionals" (Jean R. McFarland, Gary Leske, Caroline S. V. Turner) reports the results of a survey in which nonwhite males, nonwhite females, and white females who had been identified by their peers as leaders in the field of education were interviewed to identify barriers to advancement in leadership faced by minority group members and strategies used to overcome them. "A Qualitative Assessment of Office Design Perceived by Older and Younger Workers to Impact Work" (Virginia W. Kupritz) examines design characteristics perceived as facilitating or impeding work and the compatibility of office design with today's aging work force. "Consequences of Part-time Work for Full-time Coworkers: Procedural Fairness in Human Resources and Employee Reactions" (Shannon L. Palmer) explores the relationships among having a part-time colleague, general and procedural fairness, workload, colleague availability, and part-time work advocacy. "Disability Disclosure, Recruitment Interviews, and the Employment Process" (Tonette S. Rocco) discusses a study in which individuals with invisible and visible disabilities were interviewed about disclosure, accommodations, and their employment experiences. (MN)

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Workforce Issues Facing HRD

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Jean McFarland, G P Morgan and Associates, Inc.

Gary Leske, University of Minnesota

Caroline V. Turner, University of Minnesota

8 - 2 A Qualitative Assessment of Office Design Perceived by Older and Younger Workers to Impact Work

Virginia Kupritz, University of Tennessee

8 - 3 Consequences of Part-time Work for the Full-time Coworkers: Procedural Fairness in Human Resources and Employee Reactions

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8 - 4 Disability Disclosure, Recruitment Interviews, and the Employment Process

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Contributing Factors to the Success of Women and People of Color in Leadership Roles: A Message to HRD Professionals

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Non-white males (NWM), non-white females (NWF), and white females (WF), identified by their peers as leaders in the field of education, were surveyed by telephone interviews and mail questionnaires to learn whether they experienced barriers to advancement into leadership positions and, if so, the strategies they used to overcome those barriers. Respondents credit family, peer, and mentor support and give suggestions to other women and people of color and to HRD professionals for enhancing advancement.

Keywords: Leadership, Gender Diversity, Cultural Diversity, Training

This study of women and people of color in leadership roles is of those in vocational education; however, it could be of women and people of color in any professional arena, and the results can be applied to industry and service organizations as well as education.

Problem Statement

Studies continue to report underrepresentation of women and people of color in administrative and leadership roles in the field of education and, particularly, in vocational education (Darden, 1991; Leonard & Papa-Lewis, 1987; Marshall, 1984; Troupe, 1993; Young, 1991). In addition, as noted by Troupe (1993), "oversight by the research community for vocational education has created a void in research studies and current statistical data on people of color. . . . New studies are long overdue. . . . Significant data that are current and complete are not available" (p. 3). Troupe's research identified only sixty-one African-American state-level administrators nationwide and called for more new studies examining underrepresentation of people of color.

Theoretical Framework

This work can be viewed in the light of communication, culture, and contingency theories. Theories of communication and culture are intertwined and cannot be separated. The most basic communication theory states that the message received by an individual is not the same as the message that was sent to the individual. The difference is primarily due to interpretation within the perspective of the recipient. If people of different cultures are added to this same communication model, additional and different perspectives are automatically included, multiplying the opportunities for misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and miscommunication of messages. This, in turn, contributes to malfunctions within the contingency theory. Contingency theory concerns organizational structure and the fit of substructures into the organization as well as the fit of the organization in its environment. The following literature review demonstrates that misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and miscommunication stemming from cultural differences (whether due to gender, race, or ethnicity) can lead to overlooking good, perhaps exceptional, "fits" of qualified people for organizational roles.

Literature Review

It appears that women and people of color face similar barriers in their advancement to leadership positions, but several facilitators for their advancement are also reported.

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Barriers to Advancement

Women and people of color experience both external and internal barriers to advancement, but external barriers appear to be far more significant than internal barriers. External barriers are organizational, referring to "those environmental variables that may mediate entrance into the administrative hierarchy" (Leonard & Papa-Lewis, 1987, p. 195). Internal barriers are "those that are psychological in nature and that are aspects of the personality, values, and attitudes of the individual" (p. 195). Although external and internal barriers are clearly interactive, the greatest differences among barriers appears to be within the internal barriers, those that are psychological in nature and are the result of socialization.

Internal Barriers

The internal barriers identified for women were *role conflict* (Adkison, 1981; Bowers & Hummel, 1979; Darden, 1991; Metzger, 1985; Morrison, 1992), *limited career aspirations* (Johnston, Yeakey, & Moore, 1980; Pottker & Fishel, 1977), *low self-image* and *lack of self-confidence* (Grengg & Thompson, 1982; Hennig & Jardin, 1977), *fear of success, lack of aggressiveness,* and *unwillingness to take risks* (Cottrell, 1976; Gross & Trask, 1976; McMillan, 1975; Schmuck, 1975).

Only two of the above internal barriers were identified for people of color: *role conflict* (Adkison, 1981; Alexander & Scott, 1983; Nieves-Squire, 1992; Ortiz, 1982; Shivers, 1985) and *lack of self-confidence* (Young, 1991). However, several additional internal barriers were identified for people of color: *lack of organizational savvy* (Morrison, 1992; Valerde, 1980; Young, 1991), *ineffective communication skills* (Young, 1991), *insufficient education* (Valerde, 1980; Young, 1991), and *inappropriate focus on issues of race and ethics* along with *hypersensitivity* to these issues (Young, 1991).

External Barriers

The literature indicates that external barriers--those that are present in the environment--are far more significant than internal barriers. Morrison (1992) stated, "The most significant barriers today are the policies and practices that systematically restrict the opportunities and rewards available to women and people of color" (p. 33). The external barriers faced by women and people of color were identified as lack of commitment to and enforcement of *sex- and race-equity policies* (Marshall, 1984; Morrison, 1992; Murphy, 1988); *lack of access to informal networks* (Baugher & Martin, 1991; Leonard & Papa-Lewis, 1987), *stereotypes* held of women and people of color (Adkison, 1981; Murphy, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1987; Terborg, 1977), *white-male values and attitudes* towards these groups (Baugher & Martin, 1991; Darden, 1991; Marshall, 1984), *lack of role models, mentors,* and *sponsors* (Baugher & Martin, 1991; Morrison, 1992), *tokenism* (Kanter, 1975; Ortiz, 1982), *lack of opportunities for leadership preparation* (Grengg & Thompson, 1982; Morrison, 1990), *lack of support networks* (Jones & Montenegro, 1983; Murphy, 1988), and *infighting* (Morrison, 1991). One additional barrier was identified for women: *sex-typing of jobs* (Brown, 1979; Kanter, 1975; Marshall, 1984). Also, the literature noted that women of color face the especially difficult situation of suffering the barriers for both groups, the "double whammy" of sex and race discrimination.

Facilitators for Advancement

Many more barriers were noted in the literature than facilitators. The facilitators were almost always general in nature. Hence, the facilitators are simply presented here in list form:

- Changing hiring policies (Shakeshaft, 1987).
- Developing and providing mentors, sponsors, and role models (Alexander & Scott, 1983; Marshall, 1984; Shakeshaft, 1987).
- Placing women and minorities in positions of power (Shakeshaft, 1987).
- Providing access to relevant training programs (Alexander & Scott, 1983; Jones & Montenegro, 1983; Leonard & Papa-Lewis, 1987; Marshall, 1984; Shakeshaft, 1987; Troupe, 1993).
- Developing personal and social supports (Alexander & Scott; 1983; Jones & Montenegro, 1983; Marshall, 1984; Shakeshaft, 1987; Shivers, 1985).
- Identifying clear criteria for success and making it known in the organization (Marshall, 1984).
- Implementing affirmative action laws (Oklahoma State Department, 1975; Shakeshaft, 1987).
- Obtaining experiences to prepare women for leadership (Oklahoma State Department, 1975).
- Being the best qualified for the job (Murphy, 1988) or developing impeccable interpersonal and technical skills (Alexander & Scott, 1983).

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- Having extraordinary effort recognized and rewarded (Murphy, 1988).
- Having formulated specific strategies for advancing goals (Alexander & Scott, 1983).
- Having participated in team sports when children (Hennig & Jardin, 1977).

Some of the best facilitators are personal characteristics and skills. African-American women administrators in California community colleges stated that personal characteristics and skills necessary for successful administrative careers are self-confidence, fairness and objectivity, decision-making skills, intelligence, flexibility, organizational ability, good health, conceptual skills, patience, humor, interpersonal skills, enthusiasm, and communication skills (Shivers, 1985). Alexander and Scott (1983) noted that the most frequently reported personal characteristics of successful African-American female administrators were unwaning self-determination; willingness to dream and share those dreams with people who can turn them into reality; willingness to take risks; and viewing work as a career, not just another job.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this research project was three-fold: (1) to identify successful women and people of color who are presently in administrative and leadership roles in vocational education, (2) to identify barriers to attaining those roles as experienced by study participants, and (3) to identify strategies by which study respondents overcame barriers to attaining positions of leadership in vocational education. To address these purposes, the authors had to determine (1) the barriers, if any, individuals overcame to become leaders, (2) the strategies used to overcome barriers, (3) assistance and support, if any, provided to women and people of color along their career paths, and (4) subjects' suggestions for enhancing advancement of women and people of color into leadership and administrative roles.

Methodology

Two data gathering strategies were used in this project: telephone interview and mail survey. This article presents the mail survey portion of the project.

Questionnaire Development

Information from the literature review and preliminary analysis of the telephone interview data was used for questionnaire item development. The draft questionnaire was evaluated for face and content validity, completion time, and interpretation and comprehensibility by a five-member advisory panel representative of the population. Following revisions based on their feedback, the instrument was field tested with volunteer members of a graduate-level class concerning two-year post-secondary institutions. Twenty persons completed the questionnaire and provided feedback and time estimates.

Sampling

Those invited to participate were nominated by their peers in the field. Thus, leaders were recognized as such by persons in national- and state-level positions in vocational education. Nominees then nominated others whom they considered leaders in vocational education, resulting in second- and third-tier nominations. This process facilitated location of 320 white women and people of color who are leaders in vocational education. Because a few nominations were incomplete, only 308 nominations could be used.

Sample

Surveys were mailed to the 230 people who were not part of the telephone interviews. Four surveys were undeliverable. Of the 226 delivered questionnaires, 161 (71.2%) were completed and returned. The demographic data indicated that these individuals were primarily in administrative roles.

Data Analysis

Data from the surveys were entered into an SPSS computer software program and, in keeping with the usual analyses of a descriptive study (Babbie, 1986), were analyzed for means and frequencies.

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Results

The major sections that follow are related to the research questions. From the data, a profile of the respondents was compiled that indicates their overall demographics, perspectives of leaders and success, organizational barriers to leadership development, personal strategies for overcoming barriers, organizational facilitators, and suggestions for enhancing leadership development.

Demographics

A general overview of the respondents revealed a profile of married men and women over forty-five years of age who are highly educated and primarily white females or African-Americans. A closer analysis, however, identifies these groups as non-white males (NWM), white females (WF), and non-white females (NWF). Interesting similarities and differences exist among the groups.

For example, a higher percentage of NWM (78.6% of 14) over 45 years of age are in leadership positions in vocational education than are either WF (58.1% of 105) or NWF (58.8% of 34) over 45. Of the non-white respondents, 64% of males and 47% of females are African-Americans. At least 50% of each group have a master's degree and at least 32% of each group have a doctorate degree. The majority of NWM (78.6%) and WF (59.0%) are married compared to 38% NWF.

Perspectives of Leaders and of Success

Just as respondents' demographic and workplace backgrounds are needed to provide context for the results of the questionnaire, so are their perspectives of the attributes of leaders, definitions of success, and critical factors that contributed to their becoming leaders.

Leaders

When asked for their definitions of leaders, differences and similarities occurred among the groups, but primarily differences were between men and women, rather than among ethnic or racial groups. From a list of 35 descriptors of leaders, 93% of NWM chose *resourceful, honest,* and *competent* as descriptive of a leader. These were followed by *supportive* and *effective* (86%). The most frequently chosen descriptors by WF were *articulate* and *communicator* (87% each), closely followed by *supportive, competent,* and *visionary* (85.7% each). Non-white females also chose *articulate* most frequently (91%), followed by *supportive* and *honest* (88%). In comparison, *articulate* was selected by only 64% of NWM. In this case, differences were among males and females, not among ethnic or racial groups.

Success

From a list of eight phrases for defining success, respondents from each group most frequently selected the phrase *personal fulfillment*. White females (58%) and NWF (53%) were in greater agreement, however, than NWM (36%). Only NWM indicated another popular choice, with *helping others* ranked first choice by 29%. Again differences were by gender.

Contributors to Success

A list of 18 critical contributors to success was generated from responses to the phone interviews. In general, WF demonstrated higher levels of agreement on the descriptors than did the other groups. White females' most frequently identified contributor to success was *education* (86%), and the most frequently identified contributor of NWF was *determination* (74%). NWM (71%) added *self-esteem* to tie three descriptors as the most critical contributors to their success: *education, determination*, and *self-esteem*.

For both groups of females, *family upbringing* was included in the second-highest level of agreement (WF, 83%; NWF, 71%). Among WF, *self-confidence* tied with *family upbringing*, and among NWF, *education* tied with *family upbringing*. *Self-esteem* earned the third-highest level of agreement (68%) among NWF. *Determination* was third (81%) among WF. Clearly, all subgroups view *education, determination*, and *self-esteem* as critical contributors to their success.

Organizational Barriers to Leadership Developments

Respondents perceived most of the barriers to their advancement into leadership positions to come from within their organizations and to be differentially posed to NWM, WF, and NWF.

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Barriers Respondents Overcame

From a list of 16 barriers (Table 1) generated from responses to the phone interviews and from the literature, NWM indicated that *racial discrimination* is the greatest barrier posed by their work organizations, 86% (n=14) noting this barrier. Non-white females indicated *racial discrimination* and *lack of network system* as their greatest barriers, 41.2% (n=34) noting each of these barriers. The *lack of networking system* also is a significant challenge to NWM (50%) and WF (41.9%). White females reported *gender discrimination* as the greatest barrier posed by their work organizations. However, this barrier was not reported by NWM and was ranked 13th by NWF, based on percentage of respondents who indicated it is a challenge.

The second most frequently reported barrier by WF (53.3%) was *family responsibilities*; it was the fifth most frequently reported barrier by NWF (25.4%), and the tenth by NWM (14.3%).

Personal Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

As would be expected of leaders, respondents took the initiative to develop their skills and prepare themselves for advancement. They chose two courses: higher education and leadership development opportunities.

Pursue Further Education

Respondents were asked to rank 12 strategies for overcoming barriers to advancement of women and people of color--at least 61% of each group responded. The first-choice strategy implemented was *sought further education*. Other choices offered were *networked, worked harder, became more visible, sought other opportunities, reapplied for positions, attended self-improvement seminars, sought mentors, waited for another opportunity, redefined career goals, relocated, and sought career counseling*.

Develop Leadership Skills

Most respondents actively worked to develop their leadership skills by attending leadership courses and workshops/seminars; conducting leadership workshops/seminars; and assuming leadership roles in professional, work, and community organizations. High percentages of all groups attended workshops/seminars (86-97%). Over 91% of the women used that method to develop their leadership skills.

All respondents of each group answered the question about activities they had undertaken to develop their leadership skills. Very high percentages (74-94%) from each group are active in leadership roles in professional, community, and work organizations. Women, particularly, assume leadership roles in their work organizations: 91% of WF and 94% of NWF. These exceptionally high percentages reflect women's strategies to overcome organizational barriers to advancement.

Table 1. Rank Order of Challenges Overcome by Respondents in Each Group

NWM (n=14)	*%*	*WF (n=105)*	*%*	*NWF (n=34)*	*%*
Racial Discrimination	85.7	Gender Discrimination	70.0	Lack of Networking System	41.2
Lack of Networking System	50.0	Family Responsibility	53.3	Racial Discrimination	41.2
Too Few Openings	50.0	Lack of Networking	41.9	Too Few Openings	38.2
Cultural Discrimination	42.9	Too Few Openings	40.0	Lack of Mobility	29.4
Too Few Role Models	42.9	Conflict with Spouse Career	31.4	Family Responsibility	29.4
Lack of Influential Mentor	35.7	Too Few Role Models	31.4	Age Discrimination	26.5
Lack of Mobility	28.6	Lack of Mobility	28.6	Cultural Discrimination	26.5
Age Discrimination	21.4	Insufficient Education	23.8	Conflict with Spouse Career	23.5
Insufficient Education	21.4	Lack of Influential Mentor	22.9	Too Few Role Models	23.5
Family Responsibility	14.3	Age Discrimination	21.9	Lack of Self-Confidence	17.6
Lack of Self-Control	7.1	Lack of Self-Confidence	19.0	Fear of Success	17.6
Gender Discrimination	0.0	Lack of Assertiveness	13.3	Lack of Assertiveness	17.6
Parental Discouragement	0.0	Fear of Success	9.5	Gender Discrimination	15.0
Fear of Success	0.0	Parental Discouragement	6.7	Lack of Influential Mentor	14.7
Lack of Assertiveness	0.0	Racial Discrimination	1.9	Insufficient Education	14.7
Conflict with Spouse Career	0.0	Cultural Discrimination	1.9	Parental Discouragement	2.9

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Organizational Facilitators of Leadership Development

Many respondents reported that their organizations have implemented culture (53-67%) and gender (46-67%) diversity appreciation programs, but perceptions vary as to whether their administrators value diversity and whether the programs are successful.

One criterion by which respondents judge the success of their organizations' diversity appreciation programs is whether the organizations employ more NWM and NWF in administrative and leadership roles than were in those roles five years before. Overall, the groups were negative about an increase of NWM (59-71%) and NWF (50-79%) in these roles. All groups (63-79%) perceived more WF to be in leadership roles than had been five years before.

In assessing their administrations' valuing of diversity, respondents, overall, produced means of 3.1 to 3.4 on a scale of one to five where one equals *not at all* and five equals *very highly*. The response distribution implies that respondents perceive some valuing of culture and gender diversity. These results correspond to respondents' general lack of enthusiasm when asked if they perceived more women and people of color in administrative and leadership roles now than were five years before.

In view of the data on valuing diversity, the data on respondents' perceptions of their organizations' success with these programs are not surprising. Overall, on a scale of one (not at all successful) to five (very successful), the highest concentration of votes by respondents from organizations that have already implemented valuing diversity programs indicate that respondents perceive their organizations' success with the programs to average between 2.8 and 3.1, moderately successful.

Respondents were given a list of possible factors that account for the success of their organizations' diversity programs: *administrative support, recognition of problem(s), implementation of program, program attendance*, and *voluntary attendance*. They were asked to rank the success factors on a scale of one (most important) to five (least important). Overall, *recognition of problem(s)* and *administrative support* were ranked as either first or second in importance by all subgroups, and *voluntary attendance* was perceived as least important for success.

Respondents also addressed reasons for failure of diversity programs. The highest-ranked reason was *lip service, but no action*, on a scale of one (most important) to five (least important. Other reasons addressed by respondents were *programs not backed by administration, organization members do not recognize the problem*, and *organization members did not attend programs*. This last reason was perceived as least important. This data complements the data on factors for success where voluntary attendance was also viewed as least important.

Respondents' Suggestions for Enhancing Advancement. Respondents were asked to rank five suggestions for enhancing advancement of women and people of color into administrative and leadership roles. All groups ranked *networking* and *mentoring* as their highest choices. *Mentoring* was the most frequent first choice of WF. Interestingly, higher percentages of each group either mentor or support others than have been mentored or supported themselves. From 71-86% mentor or support others in the field of vocational education. It is worth noting that the numbers of mentors inside and outside the field are basically equal.

Respondents' perceptions of the suggestions for advancing women and people of color into administrative and leadership roles relate to the strategies they have successfully used to overcome organizational barriers--seeking further education and developing leadership skills. Nonwhite males emphasize *internships, valuing diversity training*, and *leadership training* in addition to *networking* and *mentoring*; whereas, NWF and WF emphasize *leadership training* in addition to *networking* and *mentoring*.

In addition to ranking suggested strategies for overcoming barriers, respondents provided open-ended suggestions that fell into sixteen categories (see Table 2). In general, the suggestions are consistent with other responses; however, one unique item is the suggestion of cultural diversity and equity training for *administration* and *staff*. The respondents basically are advocating strategies they have utilized, but appear to believe awareness development remains important to advancement of women and people of color.

Conclusions and Limitations

Family responsibilities (WF, 53%) and discrimination remain barriers. White females reported gender discrimination was their greatest challenge, and NWF and NWM reported racial discrimination was their major challenge.

Participants identified strategies they have used to overcome barriers and recommended additional strategies to be used.

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Strategies Used.

Seventy-four percent or more of respondents assumed leadership roles in professional and community organizations in an effort to develop their leadership skills. Even more, 86%, reported that assuming leadership positions in their work organization was a strategy for overcoming barriers to leadership positions.

Strategies Recommended.

Most of the recommended strategies for increasing the number of women and people of color in leadership positions were addressed to organizations. The most frequently stated suggestion urged administration's support of mentoring.

Mentorship is viewed as a good source of knowledge for the roles sought and a means of becoming aware of leadership development options. The WF surveyed most frequently chose mentoring as their first choice of five strategies, which included *networking, internships, valuing diversity training*, and *leadership training*.

Cultural diversity and equity training for administrators and staff were the second most frequently suggested strategies by the survey respondents. The organization's understanding of its norms and values is part of the clarification needed to facilitate moving forward to address existing barriers.

Table 2. Suggestions for Advancing Women and People of Color into Leadership Roles

Suggestions For HRD	*Suggestions For Women and People of Color*
Provide cultural diversity/equity training for administrators and staff	Seek opportunities to show your talents
Provide administrative support that encourages mentoring	Develop self-confidence
Provide grooming for leadership roles	Participate in internships
Encourage support systems	Be assertive, not aggressive
Provide role models	Seek additional education in the field
Provide opportunities to demonstrate skills	Develop a good résumé
Encourage networking	
Implement leadership development programs	
Actively recruit and provide job information	
Get rid of Good Old Boys Network	
Encourage hard work	

Among the previously mentioned strategies, networking was the first choice of the NWF and NWM surveyed. Administration's leadership in *creating networks* of employees is particularly useful for increasing communication within the organization, which improves access and understanding among employees.

In addition to creating networks, administrators should *encourage cooperation, collaboration*, and *community* by providing opportunities and incentives for diverse groups of students, faculty, and/or staff to collaborate on various endeavors.

Seeking *additional education* is a commonly used strategy and was recommended by survey respondents. They suggested funding, time-off, and moral support for those seeking degrees.

A straightforward and powerful suggestion was to *recruit* more women and people of color for leadership positions. Opportunities are essential to advancement into leadership roles.

The sampling procedure might pose limitations. First, the purposive, snowball sampling technique may introduce some bias in the study. However, given the lack of statistics and information on women and people of color in leadership positions, this sampling approach was necessary.

Also, because the population of this study, successful leaders, may have dealt with the far more numerous external/organizational barriers, internal barriers for potential leaders may be under reported. It should not be inferred that interventions may not be needed in this area.

Message for HRD Professionals and Contribution to the Profession

The primary recommendation from this study is to implement the strategies suggested by the respondents. The women and people of color in this study informed us that gender and racial discrimination continue to be factors. The environment that potential leaders from underrepresented populations must confront when dealing with the barriers associated with becoming established in leadership roles varies, but remains very unfriendly for many.

Lack of knowledge and skills appears to be a fundamental challenge. Providing access to knowledge and skill development opportunities is a continuing fundamental strategy for developing more leaders from among women and people of color. However, having the basic knowledge and skills to be a leader does not diminish other barriers or strategies.

Opportunities to demonstrate leadership potential and skills are critically needed for aspiring leaders. Work and professional organizations can and must do better, but opportunities in the larger community must also be used.

Access to information about the organization, skills required, training opportunities, and leadership positions remains a barrier within organizations. Networks and mentors are among the strategies used to address this information need. Information is power. It needs to be made available to all.

This study informs HRD professionals of the external and internal barriers to leadership roles as perceived by the women and people of color who have overcome those barriers. In addition, it contributes suggestions of those same experienced leaders for developing leadership skills in others and promoting women and people of color into administrative and leadership positions. If the vision for leadership includes greater representation by women and people of color, we must pay particular attention to the fact that many of the recommended strategies for improvement are beyond the individual person's control. External barriers are difficult to change; they have to be addressed by the existing leadership and HRD professionals.

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A Qualitative Assessment of Office Design Perceived by Older and Younger Workers to Impact Work

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This study examines the compatibility of office design for today's aging workforce. A cohort comparison was conducted utilizing an ethnographic method. The study identifies design characteristics perceived as facilitating and impeding work. Tentative findings indicate that both older and younger workers perceive similar design features as facilitating and impeding work. In particular, privacy needs surfaced as a primary concern of workers. Implications for human resource development (HRD) are discussed.

Keywords: Office Design, Older Workers, Qualitative

The present study attempts to inform HRD practice about office design features that accommodate the aging diversity in the American workforce. Demographic studies project that the aging population will play a significant role in the diversity of the American workforce (AARP, 1996; Brill, 1993; Hopkins, Nestleroth, & Bolick, 1991). Research to date has not examined the impact of office design on older workers; nor has research examined cohort perceptions. The research question for the present study asks: "What office design features do older and younger workers perceive as facilitating and impeding work?" Older and younger learners need a supportive work environment to help bridge the gap between the training environment and the practical work environment. The physical design of the workplace is a potential contributor to the transfer of training that is rarely examined in HRD research. HRD is in the business of improving performance. Training and development, therefore, should not take place in a vacuum for training sake; rather, it needs to occur in a larger organizational context that emphasizes the particular organization's mission and circumstances. This means that prior to setting up the training program emphasis should be placed on the organization itself, taking into account organizational issues that can impact the ultimate success or failure of the training intervention (Foxon, 1995).[1] This includes the appropriateness of the physical setting because of its potential impact on worker performance. Research examining individual, group and organizational performance documents that office design can enhance or inhibit overall organizational effectiveness (Brill, Margulis, Konar, & BOSTI, 1984,1985; Davis, Becker, Duffy, & Sims, 1985; DeMarco & Lister, 1985; Springer, 1986; Vischer, 1996). Based upon experiences since his 1984, 1985 research, Brill (1993) proposes that providing a supportive physical environment can yield a productivity benefit equal to 2 to 5 percent annual salary in all job categories.

The appropriateness of the physical setting for training transfer needs to be accommodated for in training and developing older and younger workers. It is an issue of increasing interest to HRD practitioners. An unsupportive physical environment can contribute to the failure of what otherwise may be sound training programs. For example, individuals trained to work in teams may not perform effectively when placed back into a physical environment with individual cubicles that do not accommodate teamwork. Work team effectiveness depends upon the successful management of group-organization boundaries, corresponding territorial control and a supportive physical environment (Sundstrom & Altman, 1989; Sundstrom, De Meuse, & Futrell, 1990). Conversations with a training specialist at a major university point to performance difficulties attributable to office design back on-the-job:

> In order for us within the Office of Human Resources Management to address the needs of the organization and its employees, we need to know more about the effects of the physical environment on work behavior. Quite frequently, in at least half of the [training and development] workshops I present, the discussion turns to difficulties attributable to workplace design. For instance, in a recent workshop on delegation skills, a supervisor cited her office's physical layout as an obstacle; in her opinion, the extremely open nature of the office makes it difficult to give effective feedback to employees, as other employees as well as students can hear all that is said. Similar stories, detailing the effects of physical design on routine work activities, are recounted weekly [personal communication, September 30, 1998].

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A supportive physical environment can contribute to successful training transfer. The physical environment is "not just a cost-center, but a benefit producer and a productivity tool that can be more purposively used" (Brill, 1993, p. 33). Sims points out that some companies are beginning to recognize the physical environment as an *enabler of work processes: "The key is to integrate* the physical environment with technology, management practices and work practices.
This allows employees to move where they are needed and to work where they are most productive and will be supported" (cited in Bencivenga, 1998, p. 70). For example, Hewlett-Packard and Owens Corning teamed human resource professionals with design professionals to create work environments conducive to work practices. Jakabuw oski, a workplace strategist at Hewlett-Packard, explains the company's strategy: "When most organizations are designing office spaces, they need to consider their employees—their human resources—and the way those individuals do their jobs; and that means HR professionals are, or should be, included in office redesign teams from the outset as a matter of successful business strategy" (cited in Bencivenga, 1998, p. 69).

The Aging Workforce

Demographic studies project that the aging population will have a significant impact on the diversity of the American workforce. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) projects that the most rapid increase in population growth will occur between the years 2010 and 2030, when the "baby boom" generation reaches age 65 (1996). The median age of the workforce was approximately 35 years in 1980, 37 years in 1990, and is projected to be approximately 41 years in 2005 (Brill, 1993; see also Hopkins, Nestleroth, & Bolick, 1991).

Organizations have raised concerns about the physiological decline of the aging workforce for some time (Ashcraft, 1992; Fox, 1951; Robinson, 1983; Welford, 1976). While laboratory studies indicate some decline in cognitive functions (e.g., cognition, cognitive speed, decision-making, memory, sensory factors, and perceptual-motion), negative effects of this decline appear to be absent from job performance (Salthouse, 1982). Salthouse (1982) theorizes that this may be because of the minimal demand level of most on-the-job activities when compared to laboratory tests, and work and life experiences gained from increasing age. For example, Machado and Smith (1996) investigated the impact of certain variables on productivity of work teams (i.e., service order completion) for service technicians at Bell South. Findings determined that the teams at the top ten percent in productivity were older, had much more time on the present job, and much more service with the company than teams at the bottom ten percent in productivity. Research, also, indicates that productivity can decline with age where specific job-tasks or occupations relate to the degree and type of physical effort, such as reaction time and speed of performance (Ashcraft, 1992; Robinson, Coberly, & Paul, 1985; Sheppard, 1976). Robinson, Coberly, and Paul (1985) reviewed a number of studies on occupational performance with age, concluding that "environmental conditions are important in mitigating the effects of decline in aging workers" (p. 519). Environmental conditions provide the physical context of work place design through barriers and field characteristics. Zeisel (1984) describes barriers as the physical elements that keep people apart or join them together, physically and symbolically, through walls, screens, objects, and partitions. He describes field characteristics as the physical elements that perceptually alter the physical context through shape, size, orientation, lighting, acoustics, and air quality. Ashcraft (1992) proposes that structural changes in workplace design may need to be made to support the physiological decline that occurs for older workers. While this seems intuitively valid, the impact of design barriers and field characteristics on aging worker performance empirically has not been examined. With the increasing workforce diversity, how to accommodate office design needs to facilitate job performance for both older and younger workers, also, warrants empirical examination.

Research Methods

Twenty-four administrators participated in the study, twelve older persons and twelve baby boomers. All twenty-four administrators are actively involved in their work within the same geographic area. The older persons work for nonprofit service organizations and the baby boomers work for profit and nonprofit service organizations. Work responsibilities and tasks are similar between groups. The twelve older administrators consisted of two persons, 60-62 years, and ten persons within the age range of 64-78 years. The twelve baby boomers consisted of four persons, 50-53 years, and eight persons within the age range of 38-45 years. The present study did not include ages 50-59 in the sample of older persons as the investigator believed that the sample cohort comparison of office design needs

probably would be more pronounced by sampling higher age groups, especially in the cohort of 64+ years. (This is due to the physiological changes that occur with increasing age.)

Heuristic elicitation was utilized to interview the 24 administrators. The Heuristic Elicitation Methodology (HEM) is designed to analyzé complex issues by exhausting the range of respondent perceptions concerning the variables being examined, to determine beliefs associated with the issues, and to identify interrelationships among the issues. As a cognitive ethnographic method, the basic assumption of the HEM is that it is possible to match particular items and attributes with particular cultural values (Harding & Livesay, 1984). HEM procedures help to establish authenticity through the nature and format of the questions asked, followed by content analysis techniques (see Denzin, 1978; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). HEM stimulus materials are respondent-generated and data respondent-categorized rather than investigator-generated and investigator-categorized. This preserves the language and conceptualizations of respondents and decreases the likelihood of overlooking significant attributes of a domain being examined (Spradley, 1979; 1980).

Structured interviews were conducted with each administrator over a 30-90 minute period. The structured interview is the first phase of the HEM, called the Domain Definition. The Domain Definition is an open-ended interview in which the language of the respondent is used in a series of interlinked questions, with answers recorded verbatim. Using the respondent's own language in the questions helps to establish a shared meaning of language. The HEM consists of several elicitation phases, however, any elicitation phase can be used individually and stand alone as a separate investigation (Harding, 1974). The methodology is predicated upon the idea that "language provides a powerful entry to cultural meaning structures" (Harding & Livesay, 1984, p. 75).

The Domain Definition identifies domains through semantic relationships in terms of behavior, artifacts and knowledge that people have learned or created. A "domain" is a set of categories organized on the basis of a single semantic relationship (e.g., "X" is a kind of "Y"; "X" is a way to do "Y"). The research instrument for the present study was designed to elicit information primarily about physical features followed by psycho-social features, perceived as facilitating and impeding work. The 14 questions asked avoided "referential meaning" by asking for "use" through contrast, similarity, uniqueness and the ideal in an effort to exhaust a domain (see Spradley, 1979; 1980). The following questions illustrate the nature and format of questions used in the present study:

Q. What are the different kinds of things that you do, or try to do, or try to get done in your office? [Answers = "X"]
Q. For/when "X", what conditions, or office features, or situations make it <u>easier</u> to conduct "X"? [Answers = "Y"] PROBE: What else might make it easier to conduct "X" other than "Y"?
Q. For/when "X", what conditions, or office features, or situations make it <u>harder</u> to conduct "X"?
Q. What kinds of things are important for you to be able to have in your personal office work area? [Answers= "X"] PROBE: When, at what times, or in what situations is having "X" important to you? [Answers = "Y"] PROBE: When else, other than "Y", would "X" be important for you to have in your personal office work area?

The investigator conducted a domain analysis utilizing content analysis procedures (see Spradley, 1979). This involves sorting through interview responses and identifying patterns, categories, or themes. A worksheet was developed that displayed semantic relationships. Possible cover terms and included terms that appropriately fit the semantic relationships were searched for in the data. Making systematic use of this kind of worksheet helps to uncover domains embedded in the interview responses (Spradley, 1979). Each physical item and attribute and psycho-social feature, perceived to facilitate or impede work, was represented in some domain category. Key participants reviewed the domain categories for accuracy and gave positive feedback (see Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 1988). A system of cultural meanings that older and younger workers use to denote and connote physical and some psycho-social features of the office was uncovered.

Findings

Physical Items and Attributes

Older and younger workers do not appear to differ in their perceptions about types of physical features that impact work. Elicited responses by older and younger workers indicate that similar types of items and attributes are perceived to facilitate work:

> [my office] would have up-to-date technology, meaning computer, printer, a good phone system;

would have a window;
adequate lighting;
the computer is vital, I can't imagine doing the job without it;
filing space is important, and I've added a larger filing cabinet to my space;
books, always books--I keep a supply of reference books;
larger desk with more drawers;
plenty of office space, four walls and a door;
a facility [that's] planned well for groups;
being close to the people I work with, personal interaction with coworkers is very important.
[verbatim responses by older workers]
[having] a computer, printer, etc.;
computer support; have windows--I can see windows through other spaces, so I can get some environmental clues even though it is an interior office; good lighting;
have enough space for all of the office equipment;
a place with and for reference materials;
have an area set aside just for storage;
big desk to spread things around; larger work area;
easy access to other cubes for team effort;
[being] close to my coworkers, so if I need anything, it is easy to locate different personnel;
a separate workspace for meetings and interviews that is quiet and multi functional.
[verbatim responses by younger workers]

The domain analysis revealed that the physical features mentioned most frequently by both groups as facilitating work are: up-to-date information technology; large enough workspace; close proximity to conference rooms, equipment, reference materials and supplies; windows; adequate work surface; and being near co-workers.

Elicited responses by older and younger workers also indicate that similar types of items and attributes are perceived to impede work:

my office is too small, office furniture is not adequate;

the lack of storage space that makes for a messy appearing office environment;

not having the equipment and everything we need to work with;

no windows.
[verbatim responses by older workers]

[having] the typical Dilbert cube; multiple people being in one office;
[my space is] too small, can't fit everything I need to work with, some stuff is stored elsewhere;
too small, not made for us, used to be an old lab, so we don't fit;
not enough work office, not enough room for storage, full of office equipment, no windows, etc..
[verbatim responses by younger workers]

Lack of office space, lack of storage space and lack of windows, as well as inadequate equipment appear to impede work for both older and younger workers. The individual workspace being too small was mentioned most frequently by both groups.

Privacy Issues in the Workplace

Salient psycho-social features perceived by older and younger workers as facilitating and impeding work, also, were elicited during the interviews. Psycho-social features elicited most frequently by the workers relate to privacy issues. Responses by older and younger workers indicate that similar privacy features of the work place are perceived to facilitate work:

more need for concentration time with lack of interruptions;
4 walls and a door;

no more than 1 door, so that interruptions can be kept to a minimum;
avoid interruption;
a secretary who takes our calls;
avoid outside noise;
silence;
my family pictures, every time I get frustrated I can look at them, it's a warm fuzzy;
individual office with privacy, with space I have control;
[personal workspace] big enough to meet with as many as 4 to 6 people comfortably, in private;
walls to the ceiling;
always avoid partial walls.
[verbatim responses by older workers]

being able to concentrate;
I get distracted easily, I need to be isolated;
my office is away from traffic, it is secluded;
being able to close the door;
not being bothered by the phone and the public;
no distractions;
no walk-in traffic;
room to individualize [with] pictures on the wall when you need to spend a lot of time in there;
close proximity to work area and conference rooms for meetings [to have] more privacy for support staff;
full walls;
no cubicles.
[verbatim responses by younger workers]

Responses by older and younger workers also indicate that similar privacy features are perceived to impede work:

distracting noise;
the level of noise;
voices of surrounding coworkers;
being interrupted;
interruptions by flow of traffic;
having an open door policy;
too many walk-ins;
if wanted to concentrate, have to work hard to get away from distractions;
probably the general crowding;
lack of privacy and crowding; hard to talk confidentially.
[verbatim responses by older workers]

noisy [office] because it is in the main traffic area;
noise level that interferes;
ringing telephone;
being interrupted by other people;
too convenient for people who want to kill time to stop by and kill time;
cramped; the sense of being closed in and that you couldn't swing a cat in one office;
some of the nature of the work we do should be confidential--it is tough with cubicles--and we have no formal conference area for meetings.
[verbatim responses by younger workers]

Uses of the term "privacy" in work environments generally reflect the regulation of interaction, which encompasses retreat from incoming stimulation (generated by people and environmental stimuli) and information management, that is, outgoing information (Sundstrom, 1986). The particular privacy features perceived as facilitating and impeding work in the present study are common meanings found in the privacy literature on work environments. (See Justa & Golan, 1977; Kupritz, in press; Oldham, 1988; O'Neill, 1994; Sundstrom, Herbert, & Brown, 1982; Zalesny & Farace, 1987). Being able to concentrate, being isolated, avoiding interruptions, and avoiding acoustical distractions are examples of regulating incoming stimulation for privacy. Having an individual

office with space to control and room to individualize an office with pictures on the wall are examples of the need to control and to personalize one's space. Altman (1975) theorizes that this need serves the main function of privacy, which is to help maintain a person's self-identity. Physical features such as having a door, an office away from traffic, conference space(s) for confidential meetings--either in one's own office or close proximity, and walls to the ceiling represent barriers used to regulate incoming stimulation and outgoing information for privacy. Privacy features perceived as impeding work are indicative of the common complaints about privacy found in the literature.[2]

Altman (1975) theorizes that the most basic privacy need is to optimize social contact (with both incoming stimulation and outgoing information) and to avoid crowding. Findings from Sundstrom, Town, et al. (1982) suggest that the next need may concern mental concentration and the avoidance of distraction, interruption, and noise. Where neither crowding nor concentration poses problems, autonomy and conversational privacy may become salient as the third need.

Implications for HRD

The theoretical considerations presented in the study, though still in their formative stage, provide a beginning knowledge base about office design features perceived by older and younger workers to impact work. The present study indicates that age diversity in the workforce does not appear to influence the overall types of design items and attributes and privacy features perceived to impact work. Older and younger workers perceive similar types of office features as impacting work, even with the physiological changes occurring in aging workers. Pending further research, structural changes to the office may not be necessary to accommodate older workers. This potentially can prove cost effective to organizations as they strive to support workforce diversity. For most American companies, facility-related expenses (i.e., real estate and equipment) represent the second largest organizational asset at about 25% operating costs, topped only by personnel operating costs at about 38% (Haworth, 1985; see also Becker & Steele, 1995). The study also indicates that privacy is a primary concern of older and younger workers that should not be overlooked when addressing the needs of an organization and its employees. This supports previous findings for younger to middle-age workers (Kupritz, in press). Generalizations, however, cannot be made at this time as privacy perceptions may depend upon the relevancy to the particular situation and needs of particular job types (see Justa & Golan, 1977; Kupritz, in press; Sundstrom, Town, et al., 1982).

The detail gained about cohort perceptions in this initial study warrants a larger study that measures the strength of item and attribute relationships and the relative importance given to office features by cohorts. This raises several questions. What is the strength of association between office design features and job activities performed? What weighting of importance do cohorts give to design items and attributes and privacy features perceived to facilitate work? Further studies also are needed to explore the impact of office design on informal and incidental learning for cohorts. The answers to these questions, along with the present findings, can help HRD professionals make informed decisions about the appropriateness of the work environment for older and younger workers as they practice new ways of working on-the-job. In a broader context, the present findings validate the physical environment as an enabler of work processes that offers an untapped resource for HRD intervention. Providing a supportive physical environment is an "opportunity to manifest support for the organization's purpose and learning" (Dutton, 1994, p. 469).

Footnotes

1. Studies examining the transfer of training report that the percentage of training that actually transfers is extremely low, and that much of it is extinguished over time (Broad & Newstrom, 1992; Georges, 1980; Grabowski, 1983; Kelly, 1982). Organizational issues that have been documented to impact training transfer include management and collegial level of support, availability of resources and technology to support transfer, timeliness of training
   to try out new learning, training relevance, and potential application of training back on-the-job (Foxon, 1995).
2. Privacy research during the 1970's-1990's reveals that the inability to hold confidential conversations, lack of control over accessibility, the inability to avoid crowding, lack of autonomy over supervision, and distractions and interruptions can contribute to negative effects on job performance and satisfaction (Sundstrom, Burt, & Kamp, 1980).

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Consequences of Part-time Work for Full-time Coworkers: Procedural Fairness in Human Resources and Employee Reactions

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The effects of part-time work on full-time coworkers have not been fully investigated in the part-time work literature. Drawing on the fairness literature, this study explored relationships between having a part-time colleague, general and procedural fairness, workload, colleague availability, and part-time work advocacy. Implications for part-time work in organizations are discussed.

Keywords: Procedural Fairness, Work and Family, Employee Reactions

Alternative work schedules are increasingly common in the United States. Between 1982 and 1992, the number of temporary workers employed in U.S. organizations grew from 400,000 to 1,456,000 (Ansberry, 1993). Additionally, 24% of the new jobs created between 1992 and 1993 were part-time positions (Ansberry, 1993). Both employees and organizations acknowledge a growing need for the staffing flexibility offered by alternative work schedules, in particular, by part-time work arrangements (Goodstein, 1994; Pfeffer & Baron, 1988).

Voluntary Part-time Work: Effects on Part-time Employees

Past research in this area has concentrated almost exclusively on the effects of voluntary part-time work on the part-time employee (Barker, 1993). Overall, studies suggest that while part-time work may improve the part-time employee's home life by increasing flexibility in scheduling and by reducing the workload and role conflict experienced by the part-timer (Olmsted & Smith, 1989), people who choose to move from a full-time to a part-time work arrangement may be denied promotions, pay raises and may experience decreased autonomy, lowered career and personal satisfaction, and weakened connections to social networks in the work place (Barker, 1993; Negrey, 1993; Perlow, 1995; Powell & Mainiero, 1992).

Thus far, researchers have paid relatively little attention to the broader implications of voluntary part-time employment for the full-time coworkers of part-timers and for the organization as a whole. Results from three recent studies suggest that working with a formerly full-time, now part-time employee can have negative effects on full-time coworkers' career mobility, trust in the organization, and job satisfaction. By studying 15 years worth of career planning data for clerical workers at a large utility company, Barnett and Miner (1992) found that working with a temporary coworker can inhibit certain types of job promotions and career mobility of full-time workers, as compared with coworkers of solely full-time employees.

Pearce (1993), testing a sample of 223 employees and short-term contractors at a large aerospace company, found that full-time employees' trust in their organization is lower if they work with temporary workers than if they work only with full-time employees. In a similar vein, Davis-Blake (1994), using a national sample, found that the presence of permanent part-time employees is associated with lower levels of organizational commitment among their full-time coworkers. These studies have established the possibility that full-time coworkers of part-time employees may be more dissatisfied than the coworkers of solely full-time employees.

My goal in this study was to further explore the effects of part-time work policies and procedures on the full-time colleagues of part-time employees. I drew on the fairness literature – more specifically, on procedural justice theory -- to investigate the consequences of part-time work policies and practices for full-time employees working with part-timers, as well as full-time employees' reactions to such policies and practices.

Procedural Justice Overview and Empirical Research

A substantial body of research exists which explores the relationship between how organizations treat their employees and how employees perform for their organizations (e.g., Adams, 1965; Grover, 1991). Many researchers have concluded that fairness, or justice, is an important explanatory link in this relationship, and that concerns over organizational fairness arise with some frequency in the work place (e.g., Sheppard, Lewicki, &

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Minton, 1992). Sheppard, et al. (1992) identify those situations that call for organizations to make and apply policies and procedures as most likely to evoke employee concerns for fairness.

The procedural justice literature may be especially helpful in fully explaining how fairness perceptions and other attitudes surrounding part-time work issues are influenced. Procedural justice refers to the process or procedures by which organizational decisions or outcomes are reached (Sheppard, Lewicki & Minton, 1992), and many studies have shown that procedural justice plays a key role in determining employees' perceptions of fairness in the work place (e.g., Barrett-Howard & Tyler, 1986; Konovsky, Folger & Cropanzano, 1987). Several distinct facets of procedural justice have been identified and explored by previous researchers (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Tyler & Bies, 1990). Leventhal (1980) identified six procedural rules which are critical to perceptions of procedural fairness: consistency of decisions, bias suppression, accuracy of information used in making decisions, representativeness of the interests of all involved groups in decisions ("voice"), and meeting ethical norms by decisions. Sheppard and Lewicki (1987) found that managers do, in fact, use Leventhal's rules to determine their perceptions of procedural fairness. Konovsky, Folger and Cropanzano (1987) conclude that Leventhal's procedural justice rules are integral to explaining employee reactions to organizational decisions. A wealth of strong empirical support links procedural justice with several important work attitudes (e.g., Alexander & Ruderman, 1987). Procedural justice has been found to predict employee job satisfaction, supervisor evaluations, trust in management, turnover intentions, and organizational commitment (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987; Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991; Sheppard, Lewicki & Minton, 1992). Given the strong empirical support behind examining decision processes, it may prove useful to investigate the effects of procedural justice in part-time work situations. Organizational policies regarding part-time work among employees, the processes by which employees are allowed to switch to a part-time work arrangement, as well as the practices by which organizations and coworkers accommodate such arrangements, may have substantial impact on full-time employees' perceptions of organizational fairness and other work attitudes.

Hypotheses

Increased Workload

Part-time work practices may affect coworkers in a variety of ways; in particular, coworkers' workload may be adversely affected. Employees are responsible for a given set of tasks or responsibilities within an organization. These responsibilities are usually divided up among the members of a work group, according to specialty or availability of the employee. Grover (1991), in a study of coworker perceptions of parental leave policies, suggests that the process of distributing the absent employee's workload may be an important consideration in determining coworkers' perceptions of fairness and other attitudes. This relationship has yet to be explored in the context of part-time work, though it seems likely that most organizations will establish formal or informal policies regarding the distribution of workload when an employee becomes part-time. In a situation in which one member of the work group reduces his or her input at work by becoming a part-time employee, some responsibilities usually handled by this employee may be assigned by the organization to the full-time employees who work closely with the part-timer. Thus, it is proposed, that, as a result of their organizations' policies and practices regarding part-time work, coworkers of part-time employees report greater workloads than do the coworkers of solely full-time employees.

Increased Colleague Unavailability

Above and beyond an increase in workload, coworkers of part-time employees may also experience a certain amount of coworker unavailability. While part-time coworkers are out of the office for a significant amount of the work week, full-time coworkers can expect increased difficulties in scheduling meetings or consultations with their part-time coworkers. The unavailability of a part-timer is also an issue when coworkers need the part-timer to provide assistance on tasks requiring the part-timer's expertise. Finally, the need for full-time coworkers to update the part-timer on work-related information which the part-timer missed on his or her days off may also contribute to the full-time employee's perception of part-timer unavailability. Thus, it is hypothesized that coworkers of part-time employees report a greater sense that their colleagues are unavailable than do coworkers of solely full-time employees.

Moderator: Size of the Work Group

The size of the work group is proposed to moderate the relationship between working with a part-time colleague and full-time employees' perceptions of workload and colleague unavailability. Among employees who work with a part-time colleague, the smaller their workgroup, the greater the full-timers' perceptions of increases in workload and colleague unavailability. If the work group is composed of only a few people (and assuming that no one is hired to pick up the extra work, which seems a likely possibility in a professional organization), it is more likely that these few remaining employees will be required to complete the work not finished by their part-time coworker. Among employees who work solely with full-time colleagues, the size of the workgroup is not expected to have such an effect on perceptions of workload and colleague unavailability. It is hypothesized that the size of the work group moderates full-timers' perceptions of increased workload and coworker unavailability.

General and Procedural Fairness

While part-time work arrangements may raise important issues for coworkers' daily lives, from a human resource perspective, it seems critical to investigate whether organizational policies and practices regarding part-time work influence employee perceptions of the organization as a whole. In an attempt to determine the extent to which employee reactions to part-time work practices affect their overall views of how fair their organizations are, employees' overall perceptions of organizational fairness will be measured. It is hypothesized, then, that among those employees who work with a part-time coworker, those who perceive the process by which the part-timer's work schedule was determined to be fair will report greater perceptions of organizational fairness than will those employees who feel the process was unfair.

Advocacy of Part-Time Work

Additionally, the effects of part-time policies and practices on full-time colleagues' attitudes toward part-time work will be investigated. It is proposed that coworkers of part-time employees will advocate the concept of part-time work among professionals significantly less than will coworkers of solely full-time employees.

Method

Data were collected from 133 attorneys at 11 private law firms. Participants were divided into two groups: those who work with at least one part-time attorney (the "part-time" group, comprised of 40 attorneys), and those who work solely with full-time attorneys (the "full-time" group, comprised of 93 attorneys). All part-time coworkers of surveyed attorneys voluntarily became part-time after working at their firms in a full-time capacity. The overall response rate was 56%; the response rate was 60% among the "part-time" group and 54% among the "full-time" group.

Perceptions of workload were measured with a 13-item scale developed by Caplan, Cobb and French (1975). Measured with a 7-point agree-disagree response scale, items include "I feel rushed during the day" and "I have a lot of downtime at work." Colleague unavailability was measured with an 8-item scale developed for this study. Using a 7-point agree-disagree response scale, items were designed to measure the daily disruptions due to part-time coworkers. A sample item is: "It is easy to coordinate my schedule with the attorneys with whom I work"(reverse-scored). A principal-components factor analysis, no rotation, extracted a one-factor solution, explaining 42.11% of the variance. The size of the work group was measured with one open-ended item: "Including yourself, how many attorneys at your firm do you consider to be in your work group?"

Perceptions of general fairness were measured with Price and Mueller's (1986) distributive justice scale. Respondents were asked to rate how fair their outcomes such as pay, workload, and assignments were for this 6-item scale. Price and Mueller's (1986) 7-item scale measuring procedural justice, including six items capturing Leventhal's rules as well as an overall item, was used to measure perceptions of whether the decision process allowing their colleague to become a part-time employee was fair. Finally, an 11-item scale was developed to measure the degree to which attorneys advocate part-time work in law firms. Using a 7-point agree-disagree response scale, sample items include, "part-time work among attorneys is a good idea for other law firms" and "Part-time work among attorneys causes more disruption than it's worth (reverse-scored). A principal-components factor analysis, no rotation, extracted a one-factor solution explaining 51.25% of the variance.

Participants' tenure at the firm, gender, and likelihood of switching to part-time work in the future were measured (from 1 = very unlikely to 6 = very likely). Participants who work with at least one part-time attorney were asked an additional set of questions pertaining to part-time work at their firms. Participants were also asked the gender of their part-time colleague, as well as their extent of knowledge of the part-timer's employment contract, measured from 1 = nothing at all to 5 = a great deal.

Results

In order to test whether consequences of part-time work for full-time coworkers were of substantial enough magnitude to warrant attention from HRD professionals in organizations, a conservative test of the hypotheses was conducted: when applicable, coworkers of part-timers were compared, as a group, to a sample of coworkers of solely full-time employees. Means, standard deviations, intercorrelations and alpha coefficients for variables are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Zero-Order Correlations

Scales n = 133	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Advocacy	4.91	1.17	.90	-.15	-.06	-.29*	-.02
2. Colleague Unavailability	3.09	1.02		.80	-.41**	-.16	.34**
3. General Organizational Fairness	3.99	.84			.86	.25	-.28**
4. Procedural Justice	4.17	.82				.85	-.08
5. Workload	4.63	1.05					.87

Note. Alpha reliabilities of all scales are presented along the diagonal.
*p < .05, **p < .01

A series of t-tests were conducted to investigate whether participants categorized as coworkers of either part-timers or full-timers differed in important ways. Results, found in Table 2, show that the two groups are quite similar along several demographic variables. In the combined sample, only three participants (2% of the sample) had worked part-time at some time during their careers.

Hypothesis Testing: Comparisons of "Full-time" and "Part-time" Groups

Mean perceptions of workload in the part-time group (M = 4.76, SD = 1.00) and in the full-time group (M = 4.58, SD = 1.08) were not significantly different. A significant difference was found in perceptions of colleague unavailability among coworkers of part-timers and of full-timers, in the opposite direction than predicted (PT M = 2.83, FT M = 3.20, t (92.38) = -2.12, p <.05).

A t-test revealed no significant mean differences in perceptions of general organizational fairness between the part-time group (M = 4.13, SD = .80) and the full-time group (M = 3.92, SD = .85). A simple regression conducted to test whether, among employees who work with a part-time colleague, perceptions of greater procedural justice regarding the decision to allow the coworker to become part-time is a significant predictor of general fairness was nonsignificant. Finally, no mean differences among the part-time (M = 5.16, SD = 1.17) and full-time groups (M = 4.80, SD = 1.15) were found on advocacy of part-time work.

Table 2

Demographic Comparison of Part-Time and Full-Time Groups

Variable	Part-time group M	Full-time group M	t	Sig (2-tailed)	Male %	Female %
Tenure at firm (in years)	7.93	8.40	.26	ns		
Size of work group	11.12	8.55	1.95	ns		
Likelihood of switching to part-time*	1.81	2.10	-1.03	ns		
Overall sample of respondents					65.4	34.6

*Scale measured from 1 = very unlikely to 6 = very likely.

It was predicted that work group size would moderate the relationship between the work group (made up of either all full-time colleagues or including at least one part-time colleague) on perceptions of workload and colleague unavailability such that the smaller the work group, the greater the full-timers' perceptions of increased workload and coworker unavailability, but only if the full-timer has at least one part-time attorney in the group. The interaction between working with a part-time attorney or all full-time attorneys and work group size did not significantly predict colleague unavailability, but did significantly predict perceptions of workload $t(3) = 2.20$, $p < .05$. Coworkers of part-time attorneys report larger workloads than do coworkers of solely full-time attorneys, but only when they work in small work groups with part-timers. There are no differences in perceived workload among attorneys who work with part-timers and those who work with full-timers when the attorneys belong to large workgroups.

Advocacy of Part-Time Work and Procedural Justice

Given the significant negative relationship between advocacy and perceived procedural justice of the decision to allow part-time work schedules, $r = -.29$, $p < .05$, a hierarchical regression was conducted to test whether advocacy of part-time work explains unique variance in perceptions of procedural justice beyond that explained by participants' personal interests in becoming part-time themselves. When the likelihood of the participant becoming part-time is entered into the equation first, it significantly predicts procedural justice perceptions ($B = -.22$, $p < .05$), but advocacy is no longer a significant predictor ($B = -.02$, ns). Interestingly, men are significantly more likely than women to perceive that their firm's part-time employment decisions are made fairly ($r = .52$, $p < .05$). Male attorneys are significantly less likely to switch to part-time work ($r = -.46$, $p < .05$), and though this variable was not measured, it may be that male attorneys are more involved in setting their firms' policies regarding part-time work. More involvement in decision policies and potentially less personal involvement in these issues may contribute to gender differences in perceptions of the fairness of part-time policies and procedures.

Attitudes Toward Colleague Availability: The Role of Knowledge of the Part-Time Contract

A one-item measure of how much participants in the "Part-time" group know about their part-time colleagues' contracts was significantly and negatively related to colleague unavailability ($r = -.33$, $p < .05$). Thus, among attorneys who work with part-timers, the more they know about the specifics of their colleague's part-time work arrangement, the less they report their colleagues unavailable.

Discussion

Using procedural justice theory as a theoretical framework, this study investigated the effects of organizational policies and practices regarding part-time work on the work attitudes of full-time colleagues. The results of this study offer good news for organizations considering part-time work options for their employees. Allowing part-time work schedules among attorneys seems to cause few adverse effects for full-time colleagues' work attitudes. Contrary to expectations, coworkers of full-time attorneys experienced significantly more colleague unavailability than did coworkers of part-time attorneys. It may be that part-time attorneys maintain very specific, limited work schedules which are taken into account by their coworkers. Post hoc analyses support this conclusion: the more attorneys know about their part-time colleagues' work schedules, the less unavailable they perceive their colleagues to be. It may be that the more attorneys know about their colleagues' schedules, the more they temper their expectations to fit their colleagues' availability.

Results of this study do reveal a significant moderator of the relationship between whether the participant works with a part-time attorney and perceptions of workload. Attorneys who work with part-time colleagues report greater workloads when they work in a small group with their part-time coworkers. In smaller work groups, it may be that the connection between the reduced workload of the part-timer and the increase in workload required of the part-timer's colleagues is more direct and salient than in larger work groups. In larger groups, the part-timer's work might be distributed among more employees, thus requiring a smaller increase in workload for any one colleague as a result of part-time work. This finding does provide some initial evidence that colleagues of part-time attorneys do, in fact, experience some increase in workload as a result of their coworker's part-time employment, but this burden may be mitigated by the presence of more attorneys in the work group who can help to share the load.

Colleagues of part-timers also did not experience any sense of general unfairness as a result of part-time work practices at their firms. Surprisingly, attorneys' perceptions of the procedural justice of the decision by which the part-time attorney became part-time did not influence attorneys' perceptions of general fairness. Full-time attorneys' perceptions of general fairness also seem to remain unaffected by attorneys' perceptions of their firms' part-time policies. This finding seems to suggest that full-time attorneys may not be highly concerned with the fairness of the process and policies by which their firms address part-time work arrangements, a conclusion which seemingly contradicts Grover and Crooker's (1995) finding that even employees who didn't benefit directly from family-friendly policies offered by their company were more committed to their organizations than employees at firms without these policies. Interestingly, post-hoc analyses revealed that participants who were more likely to switch to part-time in the future were significantly less likely to believe that the policies and procedures by which their firms handle part-time work decisions are procedurally fair. Taken as whole, these findings suggest that participants who have a vested personal interest in becoming part-time, beyond a general advocacy of part-time work, are more likely to be concerned with the procedural justice issues surrounding part-time employment at their firms. The lack of a direct relationship between procedural justice and general fairness found in this study may also be interpreted to mean that in situations where procedures may never apply to the participant (such as asking for a part-time work arrangement), procedures are not important in determining perceptions of general fairness. More research should be conducted before any solid conclusions can be reached on this issue.

Conclusions and Limitations

Overall, the findings of this study do not offer strong support for the influence of fairness in determining coworkers' attitudes in part-time employment situations. Working with a part-time colleague does not seem to influence attorneys' general sense of whether they are being fairly treated by their firms, nor does the fairness of part-time policies and procedures seem to affect work attitudes of coworkers. It may be that instead of interpreting part-time work situations in terms of fairness, full-time attorneys rely on Deutsch's (1975, 1985) need principle instead: they may be sympathetic to their part-time colleagues' personal needs and are willing to accommodate them (Grover, 1991; Greenberg, 1987a; de Dreu, 1996).

Some limitations of the study warrant a mention here. As a correlational study, no clear statement of causation among the variables of interest can be determined. Further, all variables were collected from a single source, which introduces the potential for response bias in this study (e.g., Williams, Cote, & Buckley, 1989). Despite some recent evidence that response bias may not have the broad, comprehensive effects on research in organizations as was once thought (Crampton & Wagner, 1994), the possibility remains that relationships among variables may be inflated in this study due to response bias. Finally, the cross-sectional data collected for this study

may not be the optimal way in which to examine the relationships described in this research. If the key to explaining the effects of organizations' part-time practices on coworkers' relevant work attitudes is the adjustment of expectations, a longitudinal study may more fully capture the organizational and psychological processes which influence full-time employees working with part-timers.

Implications for Human Resources Management

The results of this study offer good news for law firms and other professional organizations considering part-time work options for their employees. The findings of this study do suggest three potentially cautionary notes to organizations regarding the implementation of part-time policies. First, attorneys who work in small groups with a part-time colleague do notice greater workloads than do attorneys in small, "full-time" work groups. Before allowing an employee to switch to part-time work, organizations should carefully consider how the workload in that employee's group can be redistributed in a fair manner. Second, employees may be more accepting of part-time work among their colleagues the more they know about the part-timer's reduced schedule. To foster acceptance of part-time work among full-time colleagues, firms may want to explicitly address the reasons for their colleague's switch to part-time work, as well as the time limitations of the new part-time schedule.

Finally, full-time attorneys who are interested in taking advantage of part-time work options in the future do not necessarily feel that the process by which their firms allow part-time work is fair. Interested coworkers may be well aware that colleagues who become part-time find that the extent to which their firms subsequently pass them over for promotions and other career opportunities far outweighs the benefits of their part-time work schedule. Organizations should be aware that employees interested in part-time work may not be at all satisfied with the way their firms treat part-timers. If they are concerned about reaping the potential benefits of allowing part-time employment among their employees, organizations should reconsider the ways in which they implement part-time work policies, as well as the effects of part-time employment on the career development of both part-time and full-time employees.

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Disability Disclosure, Recruitment Interviews, and the Employment Process

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Interviews were conducted with individuals with invisible and visible disabilities about disclosure, accommodations, and employment experiences. Individuals with visible disabilities disclosed to make the recruiter comfortable, to set the ground rules, and to undercover overt discrimination. Individuals with invisible disabilities disclosed only if necessary during the recruitment interview preferring not to disclose until employed and then only if accommodation became necessary.

Keywords: Disability, Disclosure, Selection

In employment interviews people with disabilities are often uncertain whether or not to disclose information about their disabilities and how much information is appropriate. Fear of offending the potential employer is ever present, along with the fear of being disbelieved or dismissed as incompetent (Reiff, Gerber, & Ginsberg, 1993). However, Title I (Employment) of the Americans with Disabilities Act specifies that persons with disabilities must disclose before a responsibility to accommodate exists at any point during recruitment, selection, or after employment. The issue becomes when to disclose disability status: during the recruitment and selection process, upon employment, or after a difficulty arises at work.

Research examines disclosure at the time of application, when scheduling the interview, during the interview and after an offer of employment has been made. Interviews of individuals with visible disabilities conducted prior to the passage of the ADA suggested that it was best to disclose disability status prior to the job interview (Huvelle, Budoff, & Arnholz, 1984). The reasons for this include: accepting oneself as a capable person with a disability, knowing the limitations of others "who will be overwhelmed by the disability and unable to give proper attention to the applicant's credentials" (p. 242), surprising an unprepared interviewer causes stress and discomfort creating lasting barriers, and considering it unfair not to give an interviewer time to consider the disability in terms of the work required (Huvelle, Budoff, & Arnholz, 1984). Participants cautioned that disclosing prior to scheduling an interview is not without risk. A practitioner's guide by Hughes and Graham (1994) suggested the decision to disclose should be based on if the disability is visible or invisible, accommodations will be needed, and future discovery of the disability will make the employer suspicious. They caution that an applicant should "first emphasize their job-related strengths, qualifications for the job, and ability to fulfill the essential functions of the job" (Hughes & Graham, 1994, p. 3).

Parry, Rutherford, and Merrier (1995) surveyed human resource managers who felt the type of disability determined when disability disclosure should occur. It was "recommended that employees with physical, visual, hearing, chronic, learning, or other disabilities disclose their conditions at or after the employment interview" (p. 294) while those in the health care industry thought that those with chronic disabilities should disclose prior to the interview. Overall they found that most managers preferred the disability disclosure to occur at or after the interview. Macan and Hayes (1995) found that recruiters gave interviewees higher ratings for interview presentation when the applicant with a disability willingly discussed the disability and encouraged the recruiter to ask questions. Individuals with disabilities that disclosed over the phone were evaluated more positively than able-bodied applicants, however when it came to the hiring decision, the able-bodied applicants were evaluated more positively (Tagalakis, Amsel, & Fichten, 1988). Individuals with disabilities who did not disclose prior to the interview were perceived as less honest and were less likely to be hired then those that disclosed. Parry, Rutherford, and Merrier (1996) found that business schools provide little information on disability disclosure either for their students with disabilities embarking on a job search or for students without disabilities who will have hiring power.

Hayes and Macan (1997) examined the effect of disability on hiring decisions finding that the applicant's self-presentation had a considerable effect on recruiter ratings for college students with disabilities and without disabilities. The student groups were interviewed under different situations. Government agencies specifically interested in hiring students with disabilities for summer jobs interviewed that group. The students without disabilities were competing for regular employment opportunities. Another study used video tapes of actors playing the roles of permanently disabled (wheelchair), temporarily disabled (crutches), and not identified as disabled persons (Christman & Slaten, 1991). The person with the temporary disability was seen as most hirable,

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next the person in the wheelchair, followed closely by the person without a disability. This might be due to: societal norms for being kind to persons with disabilities, socially acceptable responses, a belief that people with disabilities possess more favorable personality characteristics, and the fear of litigation or social disapproval for expressing negative attitudes (Christman & Slaten, 1991). Klassen, Jasper, and Harris (1993) concluded that "stigmatized traits do play a part in some types of employee decision making" (p. 196) and managers may be tempted to avoid hiring people "who possess a physical stigma" (p. 197) such as obesity, or physical or mental disabilities. The rationale is that hiring stigmatized people makes the other workers uncomfortable.

Method

The purpose of this study was to explore how adults learn to communicate what they need for accommodation to an employer or instructor. These questions were explored: (a) How does the individual self identify? (b) What types of information are needed to facilitate accommodation by instructors and employers? (c) Does the instructor or recruiter/potential employer have a stake in facilitating the self disclosure process? and (d) How does the instructor or recruiter/potential employer facilitate the self disclosure process? Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was chosen because there is little research on disability disclosure and as Merriam and Simpson write, "A practitioner's knowledge is usually experiential and non theoretical. Grounded theory--if it has truly been generated from the situation and is 'grounded' in the data--will give the practitioner a conceptual tool with which to guide practice" (1989, p. 100).

Two categories of disability, visible and invisible, provide the basis for experiences that cut across specific disability type. Dividing disability into visible and invisible is more meaningful to the everyday experience of HRD practitioners and adult educators who do not normally possess a background in the medical model of disability. Two purposeful samples were compared: 7 students with invisible disabilities, and 8 students with visible disabilities. Interviews lasted forty-five to ninety minutes. The selection criteria were adult status, work experience, and recent enrollment in higher education. Transcripts from each sample were checked against the audiotapes, read, and read for coding. Several months went by between work on each sample to allow categories to emerge from each sample independently. Comparisons between samples were made after all samples were completely coded, and the categories were written up into descriptive text (Wolcott, 1994).

Findings

Participants with invisible and visible disabilities approach disclosure and interviewing differently. Participants with invisible disabilities believed disclosing would eliminate them from consideration for employment. Participants with visible disabilities disclosed to alleviate it as an objection.

Participants with Invisible Disabilities

Six of the seven participants lost jobs due to their disabilities. Jed lost his business because his disability prevented him from continuing as a potter. Mel was quietly terminated when the company's insurer found out that he had a back injury. Cat, Reba, and Nan learned about their disabilities because of difficulties with work. Participants in this sample had not begun a job search since returning to school. The only participant close to graduating was self-employed. Consequently, this sample had little experience with interviewing after diagnosis.

Cat gradually lost most of her vision, kept complaining, and tried a variety of things to make her data processing job accessible. After narrowly missing a child on a bike with her car, she went to a doctor, and quit her job. Reba and Nan became depressed, seeking counseling when they could no longer function in jobs they should have been capable of performing. Both were diagnosed with learning disabilities that affected the interpersonal skills of one and the writing skills of the other. Kim and Reba suggested accommodations to their employers that were denied. Kim was eventually terminated and Reba found a new job. Nan was fired, she believed unjustly, from a job she needed. She didn't understand why she was having difficulties, which caused her to become deeply depressed losing a year of school. A counselor diagnosed her with attention deficient disorder. Kim interviewed knowing she had a disability and did not disclose during the interview for fear of not being hired. Her description:

> The interviews were traditional interviews. As I said I chose not to disclose until I had to. I'm not altogether comfortable with that now that my asthma has developed into a more severe, chronic

> state. I think that to be safe I should disclose, but I'm afraid of not getting a position due to ignorance and fear on the part of my potential employer. (Kim 469-472)

Participants with invisible disabilities did not disclose on their resumes, nor did they choose to during an interview believing they would not be offered the job and "I don't think it would be necessary for them to know" (Nan 383). Cat would have to disclose because she needs an accommodation to read. Kim and other participants would disclose only after it became necessary. They felt they risked more by disclosing up front than after a situation arose even with the fact that there is no expectation of accommodation without disclosure.

There is a potential catch-22 situation when an individual with a disability needing accommodations to complete a college degree chooses not to disclose to an employer. It is highly likely that the job will use the skills and knowledge gained from the degree. It is reasonable that the individual will need similar assistive devices and accommodations on the job as he or she did in college. One result of waiting to disclose until it is necessary, is that a supervisor will question the individual's capability to do the job viewing this new information with suspicion.

Participants with Visible Disabilities

Five of the eight members of this sample had work experience after becoming disabled. Two participants had no work experience. Six had experience interviewing as individuals with disabilities and college degrees. Participants with visible disabilities disclosed on the resume and during the interview. Four had participated in disability related activities such as advocacy groups, sport competitions, and public speaking which they listed on their resumes. Disclosing during an in-person interview situation seemed redundant. The interviewer could see the person had a disability. This formal disclosure had three purposes: relieving the interviewer's tension and discomfort with the subject of disability, setting up ground rules on permissible questions, and uncovering evidence of discrimination early. Jed summed up the reasons:

> Many of them [interviewers] said afterwards I wasn't sure what to ask...I wanted to but I was afraid to ask. ...The way I see it is I don't want to have to go there and surprise them. I don't want the uncomfortable situation. The way I see it, if they don't want to hire me because I have a disability...then I don't want to work there. (Jed 366-372)

Breaking the Ice

In in-person interview situations the disability is obvious, however, necessary accommodations are not. Bess described her tactic, "it's obvious that I have a disability...[so I] would tell them that I've been in a chair since birth and I've worked a lot with children in a wheelchair. That hasn't been a problem" (Bess 282-284). Interviewers asked her, "how I would explain my disability to my students and what I would do and if I thought I could handle things. Do you think your students are going to be able to accept your disability?" (Bess 268-270). It was "only one school system" (Bess 278) that asked those questions. The other school systems "didn't really ask me all that much about my disability" (Bess 280). In fact the one that did hire her,

> Didn't really ask me all that much about my disability. I think I did volunteer that I've worked a lot with children and I've been able to handle them and recounted some experiences but they didn't ask a lot about my disability. (Bess 309-311)

Jed, an engineering student, made the interviewer comfortable, saying,

> Do you have any questions about how I work? Feel free to ask me because I don't know what to necessarily tell them because they don't know....I try to break the ice and say it's okay to ask these type things. That's how I do it now. But usually try to bring it up some time in the direction of the interview. (Jed 282-288)

He had four site visits, each company paid for his and his attendant's transportation and hotel accommodations, and received two job offers. Another engineering student, Pat, described his experiences, "One company has approached me with a second interview with them and the other three have called to let me know that they're still looking for an opening" (Pat 490-491). A difference in their recruitment experiences was Jed graduated in ten weeks, while Pat had three more quarters in school. Both were asked by their respective programs to enter graduate school.

Discrimination

Drake, blind since birth, had two interviews by phone. One was for a job in a distant state. He was one of the top candidates for the position and they were negotiating the cost of his transportation and lodging to get to an in-person interview. He thought it best that he disclose over the phone. He described the incident,

> I disclosed before I would have got the interview and I really think that had something to do with me not getting the interview. After I told them I didn't get the interview. And he says 'really the way our community is we don't think we can facilitate your accommodations because we don't have a great public transit here. It's going to be real hard for you to get music and stuff' and in my mind I thought it was that they figured it would be easier to get somebody, a sighted music teacher in there and I said then forget them. I don't want to work for somebody that's close-minded anyway. Because I always think that I'm going to be honest with people because I want people to accept me based on my abilities and what I can do. (Drake 228-241)

This experience was similar to the interviews he had in-person locally, not getting very far with those either. After completing his teaching certification, Drake tried to gain experience though substitute teaching. This seemed a sensible course of action for any person wanting full time employment as a teacher. Drake "went down and applied for a full time job which none were open" (Drake 268) so he asked to be considered for substitute teaching positions. He had another phone interview, this time without disclosing and was hired. He described the call,

> It was a standardized interview where they asked me questions about how I would deal with certain issues. Most of it had to deal with classroom management things and I didn't do any disclosure with them. The lady I interviewed with had no idea I couldn't see. Actually, I had the interview from my job ...at the Columbus Zoo....There were screaming animals in the background and there was no disclosure at all and she hired me right there on the spot. (Drake 276-282)

Everything went well for over a year until one day after taking an assignment and arriving for work, he was told they didn't need him anymore. Ironically, the previous year at the same school he substituted for the music teacher on maternity leave. Their excuse was that two classes had now been converted into one class making too many students for him to handle. He depicted the incident this way,

> I was turned down for an assignment. After I accepted it they canceled me because one of their classes, their choir class had 100 students in it. They thought that the classes were too big for me to handle. I went down there and raised a little cane about it. I said this is discrimination. I'm a qualified music teacher. I went down to the school to find out who they replaced me with. They wouldn't tell me. They wouldn't put it into writing that they said it was because I couldn't handle big classes was the reason they gave me. I went downtown to talk to sub services and the guy down there tried to turn it around and make it look like I had problems handling classrooms. I said look, we're going to have to do something about this. I'm going to have to get a lawyer and we're going to have to start talking about discrimination and they said we need to come up with some things to better facilitate your needs and I said my needs - when I go out and teach a class I said all I need is for students to realize I'm a qualified teacher and I can teach. (Drake 287-299)

The administration claimed a teacher with a visual impairment jeopardized the safety of the students in band or choir because he could not see them misbehave, and because the classes were much larger than the previous year. Every substitute teacher experiences difficulties with students, assignments, or lesson plans. Since he had worked in this school the previous year without being made aware of any negative performance evaluations, he had every reason to believe his classroom management techniques and teaching ability were acceptable. I have to admit I have a hard time envisioning him doing his job because I have a hard time understanding how one teaches music and how someone who is blind can teach music. There are many famous musicians without sight. The dilemma for me was, how can he read the music to help his students with it? However, the administration did not ask him how he managed to assist the students "read" and play the music. Drake described his technique,

> [Made] recordings of the tunes that they were playing. Brought them home, worked on them for a couple of days and I wrote my own scores. I grabbed a student out of the class that was a real proficient music reader and I picked out all the hard rhythms that I heard in the song that I thought the students couldn't get or needed help with...She would help me pinpoint exactly where it was and so I could communicate that to the band. So they could see it. (Drake 256-262)

He told me that since this incident he had been offered many special education assignments. He had, however, no training or certification in special education.

Job Duties

Jobs are described in a variety of ways to prospective applicants in print advertisements and during the interview process. Sometimes language is used to embellish a job and its importance. Jerry described an advertisement he answered,

> [The advertisement] was very misleading. I thought the ad pertained to being--it really led you to believe that you would be administrating services. It said something like administrating social services in a social service environment which is true but I'd be overseeing donations. Actually they ended up offering me the job but I turned it down. (Jerry 382-386)

Even though he uses a wheelchair, his disability did not make it impossible for him to fulfill "some responsibilities in moving donations" (Jerry 380). He did not accept the position because with a master's degree in social work he wanted something more challenging. He applied for

> Jobs where it was family preservation which is doing in-home visits. Neither one of the ads mentioned that there were in-home visits involved. I would be willing to get out of my chair [to crawl into an inaccessible home] because I do it all the time so it's not that big a deal to me. (Jerry 389-393)

His crawling into a home would be more of an embarrassment to the employer and client than to him.

Pat did not know how to make accommodating him less daunting to potential employers, an essential job function for electrical engineering is to read schematics. He explained,

> That's sort of a stumbling point during my interviews since a lot of times when you get into large schematics...they're enormous and that's hard to spend as much time as I do with a reader on a[n] item like that. (Pat 525-530)

If he offered the recruiter suggestions on how to accommodate, reading schematics would be diffused as an issue. Pat believed the solution was a "computer programming problem. But I feel that an electrical engineer could probably design some hardware and working with a programmer could get something to work" (Pat 536-538).

Previous Work Experience

Previous work experience can be instrumental to securing an entry level position for new graduates. Some participants had work experience prior to becoming disabled but that experience was not directly relevant to the new career choice. Others found it difficult to gain experience because they were born with the disability or acquired it shortly after high school graduation. Sandy described her "work experience as sporadic. The closest thing that I had to what you would consider regular gainful employment was a year as a Vista volunteer" (Sandy 419-420). Neither Pat or Sandy had experience directly related to what they are trying to do now, engineering and communications.

Some students with disabilities were not able to get paid work experience through internships and field placements because federal and state subsidies would be jeopardized due to regulations about funding and work. These benefits are necessary to continue Medicaid eligibility or tuition payments. The engineering program overcame this for Jed, "because she [assistant dean] wanted to see me be placed [and] I wanted to get some experience" (Jed 273) they created a job for him. After "I talked to one of my professors and they said don't take an internship where you don't get paid because if you do they [an employer] won't treat you the same" (Jed 274-276) as a new engineering student with paid experience. Summer time work was arranged designing a computer program,

Jed was paid through a scholarship for books. In this instance, a concerned advisor devised a way for Jed to gain paid experience without jeopardizing benefits.

Just A Pair Of Eyes

Accommodations are as varied as are individuals. They require an imagination expansive enough to take in the disability and the job creating a potential solution. Participants used half time work arrangements, brought their own computer to work, or needed "a pair of eyes." Some arranged all of their own accommodations because they felt totally responsible, and did not know of available assistance, or were so grateful for the opportunity to work they did not expect the employer to do anything. Sandy recalled,

> I think I said something to the effect of you don't need to treat me any differently than you would treat any of the other employees. The answer from her was like, 'Well surely we're not going to treat you any better than [the other employees]...The answer kind of shocked me. (Sandy 449-453)

This conversation ended with Sandy working half a day at home and the other half of the day in the office so that her new personal computer could stay at her home. She went on with the story,

> That did not work well because they felt that I might be taking advantage and goofing off at home so we brought the computer to work. The nature of the job was such that I had to do a lot of footwork and so the friend that I have now that does reading had just retired at that time. He did my driving for me. And then he would also come to the place. I don't know how I'm going to overcome this in the future...But he would come and he would help me with visual work there. That was never really talked about by me or by them...I must have asked cause I'm sure I wouldn't have just had him come in there. But I had the impression that they didn't really like it too much. (Sandy 461-470)

Sandy was working on a doctorate. I asked her about the types of accommodations she would need as a teaching assistant. Her answer was, "Just a pair of eyes" (Sandy 533) to:

> ...Take attendance. They would keep the grade book. When I would have an exam they would be there and keep their eye on the class to make sure no one was cheating. ...They would read me the papers and I would tell them how to grade them. (Sandy 543-551)

She will be teaching a speech class next year. She is "thinking about the gestures" (Sandy 571) and how to grade them since she cannot see them. Other accommodations required physical access as Mel put it, "It's obvious that if they need to come into a room in a wheelchair it's a little bit different than walking into it. You're going to need a different type of surrounding" (Mel 327-329). Or as Jerry said "the only thing I've had them do is put a ramp in front of the bathroom and raise my desk" (Jerry 451-452). Others "need a voice activated computer" (Mel 342) and "a track ball mouse with a table high enough for me to get underneath it" (Jed 293), relatively simple things to do.

Even though many accommodations are commonplace, like ramps, some supervisors seem to want to make things difficult. Bess taught a third grade special education class. The principal fought building a ramp for Bess to enter the school because she did not want to spend the money. After a year in the accessible room, the principal wanted Bess to change rooms from one end of the building to the other. It seemed as if the principal "didn't really think it through before she said it" (Bess 351). Bess continued:

> [The principal] moved me all the way to the other end of the school. She didn't want to build [a new] ramp. In case of fire she wanted me to have my kids go out the door that had the stairs and then go around the school to the door that I could get out and then go around the school and meet my kids. But the other teachers were like, no. (Bess 340-344)

Not only did this not seem reasonable from an accommodation standpoint, it created a potentially dangerous situation for the children and Bess.

Final Thoughts

Experience with employment and the employment process was limited for both samples. Faculty, career counselors, and students need to work together with business and industry to find meaningful internships for students with disabilities. This partnership can investigate ways to lessen overt and subtle discrimination against individuals with disabilities. As Cox (1993) writes,

> It is certainly prudent to include, among the many goals of organizations, social responsibility objectives such as promoting fairness and improving economic opportunities for underachieving members of society. It also seems fair to say that achievement of social responsibility goals enhances economic performance goals in the long term. (p. 12)

Students with invisible disabilities would not disclose during the interview for fear of not being hired. They believed it better to disclose after being hired only if an accommodation was necessary. Since it is invisible, people question the disability's existence or dismiss its impact. Participants with invisible disabilities were afraid that if they disclosed they would be treated as if they were less capable and intelligent. Research on many invisible disabilities is expanding. Young fields of study struggle with research agendas and acceptance by the general public and other related fields. Popular explanations of an invisible disability's affect on skills make the person seem less competent to a prospective employer. Both students with invisible and visible disabilities adopted strategies to avoid or lessen the impact of employer discrimination during the selection interview. Students with visible disabilities disclosed during a job interview for comfort, to establish ground rules, and to uncover discrimination.

Since, the social barriers to reentry to the workplace are great for individuals with disabilities, cultural diversity training should include information relevant to decreasing "negative stereotypes and prejudices of nondisabled co-workers, and workers with disabilities themselves could also benefit from training that focuses on developing and sharpening their interpersonal skills" (Boyle, 1997, p. 267). It is important to develop an organizational climate that fosters trust between employees and management. Employees who need accommodations but are afraid to disclose for fear of losing the job cost the organization in lost productivity. Accommodations are simply tools that assist individuals work to their potential. Productivity is decreased when an employee is not working to potential (Cascio, 1994). The fear of discrimination on being discovered as a person with a disability can distract an employee from full participation in the workforce (Cox, 1993). Training and development programs that address workforce diversity should be expanded to include individuals with disabilities (Boyle, 1997). Training interviewers in non-discriminatory behavior during the selection process can reduce the costs of discrimination such as reputation, lost talent, legal and administrative costs (Cox, 1993).

Further research needs to be conducted on disability and work from the perspectives of individuals with disabilities and human resource professionals. Some questions for investigation are: how does disability disclosure affect the hiring decision during recruitment and selection, upon employment, or after a difficulty arises at work? What are the steps involved in successful disability disclosure?

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